



The Journal

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NDW Commandant Visits NSAB Facilities



Photo by Andrew Damstedt

Rear Adm. Mark Rich, Naval District Washington commandant, center, speaks with Naval Support Activity Bethesda's (NSAB) Fitness Center Director Jerry Cataldo, right, during Rich's NSAB site visit Feb. 27. NSAB Commanding Officer Capt. David Bitonti, left, provided Rich with a tour and brief at various base facilities including Sanctuary Hall, Mercy Hall and the fire station.

Joint Commission Awards Full Accreditation to the Nation's Medical Center

By Sarah Marshall
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

After a week-long review, evaluating quality and safety of care, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) again achieved full accreditation by the Joint Commission (JC).

The JC inspects more than 19,000 health care

organizations and programs across the U.S., and its members are subject to a three-year accreditation, as well as random inspections. Laboratories are surveyed every two years. According to their website, the commission's mission is to "continuously improve health care for the public ... by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel

in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value."

Joint Commission standards also go beyond just the "basics" of state and federal regulations, and set "consistently high expectations for quality and safety," as stated in a letter from the commission's Chief Operating Officer, Mark G. Pelletier, to Walter Reed Bethesda Director

Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark.

"We recognize that successfully meeting these standards is not an easy task, and doing so deserves special recognition from the Joint Commission, your Board and staff, your community, and especially your patients and their families," Pelletier wrote.

Throughout the week of Feb. 23-27, six Joint Commission surveyors (a

physician, two nurses, as well as an expert in ambulatory care, an expert in addiction services, and a life safety code specialist) evaluated WRNMMC standards and quality of care. The surveyors spent several hours each day conducting tracer activities, which are designed to "trace" the care experiences a patient has at the medical center, while analyzing systems of providing care,

treatment or services. Surveyors also evaluated staff credentialing, and tested staff on their knowledge of systems and processes, as well as the command's mission and vision. Additionally, they assessed quality of health care, patient safety and efficiency of administrative processes, and on Friday afternoon, presented leadership

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Navy Reserve Celebrates Centennial Anniversary

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class(SCW/SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau, Defense Media Activity

Service members and civilians packed the Pentagon Library Conference Center for the Navy Reserve Centennial Kickoff Celebration March 2.

Chief of Navy Reserve Vice Adm. Robin R. Braun delivered the opening remarks, commending Navy Reserve Sailors for being ready then, ready now and ready always, and introduced Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the centennial's keynote speaker.

"Serving through the Cold War, I've seen the Navy Reserve go from a group of 'One day we may need them, let's hold on to them. That's our strategic reserve,'... to integration, to addiction in Desert Shield/Desert Storm,... to really, frankly, total integration today," Greenert said.

Greenert and Braun visited the U.S. Navy Reserve displays set up in the Pentagon's Navy corridor after the opening ceremony and performed the cake and ribbon cutting.

"All 59,000 Sailors are very proud to celebrate the history and the heritage of our service and especially to highlight the millions who have served over the past century," said Braun.

Congress authorized the establishment of the Federal Naval Reserve on March 3, 1915. Initially, the only Sailors eligible to enroll were enlisted Navy



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Nathan Laird

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert (far right), Chief of Navy Reserve Vice Adm. Robin Braun (middle right), Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Juan Garcia (middle left) and Navy Reserve Force Master Chief C.J. Mitchell cut a ribbon in front of the new Centennial of the U.S. Navy Reserve display in the Pentagon March 2.

veterans. On Aug. 29, 1916, with the prospect of America's entry into World War I looming, the Navy Reserve reorganized to allow the enrollment of non-veterans and designated as the U.S. Naval Reserve Force.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, there have been more than 70,000 Selected Reserve mobilizations, along with an additional 4,500 deployments by Full Time Support Sailors, including more than 8,000 who have done a second combat tour. Since its establishment in 1915, there have been five U.S. presidents who have served in the Navy Reserve.

For more information on the Navy Reserve, search Navy.mil or visit <https://www.navyreserve.navy.mil>.

Bethesda Notebook

Daylight Saving Time Begins

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday. Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour, and also replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors.

Navy Medical Corps Ball

The 144th Navy Medical Corps Ball is scheduled for March 14 from 6 to 11 p.m. at the Mayflower Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C. Guest speaker will be Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. For more information, contact Kimberly Fagen at Kimberly.e.fagen.mil@mail.mil, or visit <https://sites.google.com/site/medicalcorpsball/home>.

Prostate Cancer Support Group

The Prostate Cancer Support Group meets at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center the third Thursday of every month. The next meetings will be March 19 from 1 to 2 p.m., and from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the America Building, River Conference Room, third floor. Spouses and partners are invited. Military ID is required for base access. For those without a military ID, call Prostate Center at 301-319-2900 at least four business days prior to event for base access. For more information, contact retired Col. Jane Hudak at 301-319-2918 or jane.l.hudak.ctr@mail.mil.

Employer Network Event

An Employer Network event is held monthly on the last Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Bldg. 11 (lower level), Rm. 16. Attendees will be able to meet with industry representatives, develop professional connections and explore employment opportunities at the event, open to all active duty, family members, veterans, reservists, non-medical attendees, contractors and civilians. No registration is required. For more information, contact Fleet and Family Support Center at 301-319-4087 or email FFSC@med.navy.mil.

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Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bethesda

Commanding Officer: Capt. David A. Bitonti
Public Affairs Officer: Ronald D. Inman
Public Affairs Office: 301-295-1803

NSAB Ombudsman
Michelle Herrera 240-370-5421

NSAB Chaplain's Office 301-319-4443/4706

Journal Staff

Managing Editor MC2 Brandon Williams-Church
WRNMMC Editor Bernard Little

Sexual Assault Response
Coordinator Hotline 301-442-2053

Staff Writers MC1 Christopher Krucke
Andrew Damstedt
Sarah Marshall
Katrina Skinner
Sharon Renee Taylor

NSA Bethesda
Fleet And Family Support Center 301-319-4087

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
Office of Media Relations 301-295-5727
NSAB Emergency Information Line 301-295-6246

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March is Red Cross Month: A Look Back at 2014

**By Marin Reynes,
Senior Station Manager,
American Red Cross
Bethesda**

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed March as "Red Cross Month." Roosevelt issued the first Red Cross Month proclamation, recognizing the American Red Cross as a true reflection of the humanitarian and volunteer spirit and calling on Americans to "rededicate themselves to the splendid aims and activities of the Red Cross."

We in your local Red Cross Office would like to use this opportunity to educate you about the programs and services provided to patients, families and staff.

The Red Cross Office at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) and on Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) is comprised of more than 600 volunteers who provided 68,787.6 volunteer hours in 2014. According to Independent Sector, a coalition of nonprofits, foundations, and corporate giving programs, that equates to \$1,749,268.67 in volunteer value added to support service members, veterans and their families. The majority of Red Cross volunteers support departments, clinics or Red Cross programs within the medical center, but many of them assist NSAB through MWR



Photo by Beverli Alford, WRNMMC Marketing Department

The American Red Cross Office at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and Naval Support Activity Bethesda meets the daily needs of patients, families and staff and will continue to do so with a variety of programs in 2015 and beyond.

events, which include but are not limited to, 5K fun runs, the annual Eggstravaganza Celebration, career fairs and all emergency exercises. Volunteers also assist the Soldier Family Assistance Center and the Fleet and Family Support office.

Volunteers in WRNMMC support a variety of activities specifically for patients, family members and care providers. Red Cross

volunteers range from civilian to active duty service members and can work as administrators or medical professional volunteers who practice the full extent of their credentials. Red Cross volunteers support a wide variety of activities to include volunteering at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence and greeting every wounded, ill and injured service member who arrives via medical

evacuation (MEDEVAC) flights. During the summer we add more than 50 youth volunteers as part of the VolunTeen Program serving throughout the hospital.

Approximately half of the Red Cross Volunteers at WRNMMC support an assigned department or clinic (i.e. General Surgery, Department of Rehabilitation, etc.) and approximately half belong to a Red Cross program specifically designed to support service members, veterans and their families in a unique, customer-friendly way. Some of these Red Cross Programs are:

MEDEVAC Program

Volunteer teams meet each incoming MEDEVAC arriving from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany with basic needs, comfort items and entertainment for patients and families. Each patient receives a welcome bag with toiletries, magazines, blankets, bottled water, snacks and local information.

In 2014, Red Cross volunteers distributed more than 450 welcome bags to patients and families.

Comfort Care Program

Volunteers visit all inpatient wards daily with basic needs items such as toiletries, adap-

tive clothing, blankets, phone cards, DVDs, video games and snack items. With justification from staff, the Red Cross also provides further assistance to patients and families in the form of a gift card or specialty item. We provide a variety of electronic assistive technology equipment and high value items as part of a service member's individual treatment plan and support with assistive technology when unavailable through other means.

In 2014 patients and families were supported by more than 30,000 of these items provided by the Red Cross.

Surgical Waiting Room Volunteer Team

The Red Cross Surgical Waiting Room volunteers act as the liaison between families and the medical staff while they wait for the result of surgery. The medical team relies on our volunteers to answer the phone and find the families to keep them apprised. Volunteers also ensure coffee, water and snacks are available for families.

Animal Visitation Program

The Red Cross currently ar-

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McGruff the Crime Dog and NSAB Security Visit the CDC

**By Mass Communication
Specialist 2nd Class
Brandon Williams-
Church
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer**

A few children at the Child Development Center Bethesda (CDC) had an extra special day Feb. 24 as Sailors from the Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) Security Department and McGruff the Crime Dog came to talk with them about the importance of 'stranger danger.'

Master-at-Arms (MA) 2nd Class Colleen Dibble and MA2 Crystal Brown shared the floor with the legendary crime-fighting character, as an intervention of sorts for the young minds, to reinforce why talking to certain strangers can be good and bad.

"Teaching children about ways they can ensure their personal safety and security at a young age can help them in their decision making as they

get older," said Dibble. "These are the lessons that teach children about what they can do to prevent crime and violence in their communities, and foster positive relationships among children, law enforcement officers and other community members."

Dibble and Brown explained why talking to someone you don't know, such as someone walking down your street whom you have never seen before, can be bad, while talking to a stranger such as a police officer or a fire fighter can be a good thing.

"Conducting visits with CDC children early on enables the value of maintaining safety and overall good morals," said Brown.

After the MAs spoke to them, the children were elated to give McGruff high-fives and hugs.

This was the part of the experience that made the lesson memorable and fun for each child in attendance.



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brandon Williams-Church

McGruff the Crime Dog gives children high-fives during his visit to the Child Development Center Bethesda Feb. 24.

Workshops Use Writing as a Healing Tool

By Andrew Damstedt
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

There are a myriad of reasons why writing workshops are offered by several commands onboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) – but the common theme they share is helping service members and veterans gain control of their story.

“I go back to my writing instead of back to the experience and being traumatized again,” said Seema Reza, one of the writing instructors. Writing allows people to gain control without leaving them exposed or vulnerable, she said, going on to say that writing about oneself could be called “the hardest work anyone does in this hospital.”

One writing participant put it this way: “You still have the control of the amount you let out.”

Recently, The Journal explored three writing options available on base, which aim to help different populations but have the same goal of showing people how writing can be a tool for their healing arsenal. In future editions, The Journal will feature writing produced in these workshops. What follows is a closer examination of three writing programs offered on base.

Walter Reed Bethesda Writing Program
Reza, one of Walter Reed



Photo by Andrew Damstedt

Veteran Tom Glenn reads some of his work at a recent gathering of the Warrior Poetry Project, which was started at Walter Reed National Naval Medical Military Center, but now has moved off-site as a way to connect the base to the greater veteran community and general public, according to founder Dr. Fred Foote, retired Navy physician.

National Military Medical Center’s (WRNMMC) Department of Rehabilitation recreational arts activities coordinators, helps coordinate the writing workshops at the medical center, one of which is open for anyone eligible for services on base, and two in-treatment writing groups. These workshops are not therapy, Reza emphasized, but are tools for self-reflection and can advance a sense of community.

“The greatest thing about writing is knowing how to talk about what you’re struggling with,” Reza said. “If they

can just find the language to explain what they are going through in a most concise way, it brings opportunities to increase closeness.”

Kerrie Earley, social worker at Walter Reed Bethesda’s Psychiatric Continuity Service, said when she first went to one of the writing classes she was “shocked by how honest and articulate and passionate people are when they write.”

And, Earley said, on more than one occasion when patients have shared their writing after being reluctant to do

so, she sees an entire room of people nodding their heads in agreement that what this person wrote describes exactly what they are experiencing.

“Writing is a way you can feel it; it’s not just a list of symptoms,” Earley said.

A former participant in the writing workshops, Marine Sgt. Joe Merritt, who was in a treatment program in 2013 for post-traumatic stress disorder and depression, said writing helped him retain control of his situation.

“For me, I find being able to write or any art in general,

but writing specifically, being able to talk about emotions or events or feelings, you can write about it in a way that doesn’t completely expose what happens,” Merritt said. “You can still guard what’s inside of you or what’s bothering you; you still have the control of the amount you let out.”

He wrote about his combat experience as well as his struggles as a single father and going through divorce in all forms of creative writing, such as short stories, poetry and essays. Before the writing program, he said he had only written in a journal.

“(Writing) kind of interested me, but I didn’t realize how much I’d enjoy it or how much I’d get out of it,” he said. “I realized it was really beneficial for me afterwards.”

In addition to helping participants write, Reza coordinates visits by writing professionals to the Bethesda USO and to Fort Belvoir, to share how writing has helped them.

“It’s nice for them to see someone be vulnerable and say ‘Yes, I’ve been there in some kind of darkness,’” Reza said. “This is how I got out. You can use this too if you choose to accept it.”

Although workshop participants don’t have to share their work, Reza said 180 participants had their writing published, exhibited or per-

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Healing Words: Writers’ Spotlight

By Andrew Damstedt
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

Writing workshops take place at several commands onboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda each week, with the goal of helping service members and veterans use writing as a way to help heal. The Journal plans to feature some of the writing produced from these workshops with the authors’ permission in this and following editions in a new feature called Healing Words: Writers’ Spotlight.

The inaugural work is by Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (FMF) Michael Marquette, who wrote a poem entitled, “Lost

time.” During his more than 14 years of military service, Marquette, 34, has deployed to Iraq twice, and in 2003 was in the first wave with the U.S. Marines Corps Second Tank Battalion. He also served at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp and was part of a NATO mission in Spain.

He works at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center as a behavioral health technician and has worked as a clinic manager and case manager for a child and adolescent psychiatric unit. He also responded to the Washington Navy Yard shooting incident in 2013, helping more than 900 civilian and military personnel receive care. Marquette is being medically

retired in March and said the Navy Wounded Warrior Safe Harbor program has helped him immensely.

He started writing as part of a post-traumatic stress disorder group consult, he said.

“I first started writing to let out my anger and pain, but now it has grown into trying to feel the good about life and my future,” he said. “To feel needed and have a purpose while remembering the past, not dwell in it. Without writing I would feel even more bottled up and scared. Every day is a struggle, but writing – it’s a great release. I was scared at first that I would be bad at it but if you truly write from your soul and heart, you can’t fail.”

Lost time

By Michael Marquette

What have I done is it wrong or right. I fight the fight with gauze and tape. Both sides feel the touch of my hands.
The journey long and hard.
Years and years of pain with weathered hands.
Cold, hot, scared yet not.
Weeks and weeks in the field of safety near my home not even enough to prepare me for war.
Like a bird’s first flight stumble I thought I might.
Like a ghost I passed through time unseen and un scared I thought, but now I know that ghosts have scares too. Just like them you cannot see the scares of what has happened to me during my lost time.
My lost time is my own but I am not alone, for there are many ghosts among us living with scares.
Right or wrong is not the question that should be asked but instead,
What can I do to help again.

WRNMMC

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with their results.

The surveyors stated WRNMMC offers, "Exceptional care provided by exceptional people," and stated, "You are an incredible organization ... you provide very good care for your patients."

In an email to staff, Clark agreed, encouraging everyone to take pride in, "Who we are, what we do and, most importantly, how we do it."

"We are devoted to the 'Extraordinary Patient Experience for Every Patient, Every Time - Quality is the cornerstone of the Patient Experience,'" Clark said. "I could not be more proud. Based on our Joint Commission Survey, it is clear that we excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value for America's Heroes ... Please take a moment and be as proud as I am to serve with our Walter Reed Bethesda Team."

Gene Monroe, Joint Commission program manager at WRNMMC, shared similar sentiments.

"I'm always proud of this organization," he said. Successful surveys, and the coming together of staff, have "never failed to make me feel so grateful to be part of this team."

Monroe explained the surveyors were particularly impressed by how staff members received and engaged their team, and took away many best practices.

"They were amazed at the high level of sophistication, quality and safety of the care we provide here," Monroe said.

There were minor improvements that needed to be made, and many were corrected on the spot, he said. Monroe and his team will focus on turning other improvements into projects, he explained. He also noted there were no "systems-level" findings. This is remarkable, considering the team focused heavily on finding ways to improve systems, and none were identified, he said.

Following last week's large-scale assessment, the next step will be to focus on improvement projects and sustainment, he said. Monroe noted he could not do his job without the numerous supportive staff members throughout the command to whom he and his team can always turn to for support. "They really bring the notion of always being ready, to heart."

Walter Reed Bethesda successfully completed its first JC survey, receiving full accreditation in March 2012, months after it was established as a result of the integration between Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC).

From the moment the

last survey was complete, preparations were underway for the survey that took place last week, Monroe said. Another mock survey will take place about a year from now, and the medical center will remain engaged in a continuous cycle of assessment and improvement at all levels, he said.

While it's important to prepare for the survey, the one priority is about understanding the needs of our patients, as well as the medical center's patient-centered mission, vision and goals, Monroe explained.

"We're not doing this for the next survey. We're doing it for our next patient, our next customer," he said.



Photo by Sarah Marshall

Robert R. Smith, RN, MPA (center) Joint Commission (JC) survey team leader, explains to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) staff members what JC surveyors would be looking for during their evaluation of WRNMMC at a welcoming briefing on Feb. 23. A JC surveyor since 2005, Smith and his team conducted a week-long evaluation of WRNMMC's quality and safety of care, resulting in the medical center again achieving full accreditation by the JC.

Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant

The Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine Inc. (HJF) is seeking a motivated Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant with a passion for delivery of high quality care in the Center for Prostate Disease Research (CPDR) Program located at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, Maryland. HJF provides scientific, technical and programmatic support services to CPDR.

The position offers mentoring and collaboration opportunities to provide patient & family centered care, practicing along highly experience providers and ancillary staff. Responsible for the clinical practices and research practices as defined and designated by senior clinical staff. Acts as a patient care coordinator in a combined clinical and research setting. CPDR has established expectations for every provider based on core values of patient centeredness, teamwork and excellence.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

1. Knowledge of procedures and techniques necessary for performing clinical responsibilities related to patients from primary diagnoses to advanced disease with incorporation of research protocols.
2. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills; and the ability to maintain accurate and complete files.
3. Participates in professional activities.

Minimum Education/Training Requirements: Master's degree in Nursing experience as a Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant with a Bachelors degree required.

Minimum Experience: 2 to 4 years

Physical Capabilities: Requires long periods of standing; may require lifting and bending to assist patients

Required Licenses, Certification or Registration: Must possess or be in the process of obtaining an active Physician Assistant (PA) or Nurse Practitioner (NP) license in the state of Maryland. Must process or be in the process of obtaining an active DEA license.

Work Environment: Clinical hospital environment

HJF is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, protected veteran status or other status protected by law.

Please apply on-line at <http://www.hjf.org/careers/> click "Advanced Search" and enter job number 209544 in the Job Opening ID box. OR fax your resume to 240-694-3151. Please specify title and job number on fax.

WRITING

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formed in 2014. But, she said, the real benefit of writing is helping people learn how to put into words what they might be struggling with.

To get involved in the open classes, contact Reza at seema.b.reza.ctr@mail.mil.

NICoE Creative Writing Workshops

Creative writing is an option during the four-week stay for service members who are going through the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) treatment program. In addition to guided writing sessions with NICoE therapists, volunteers from the Veterans Writing Project with assistance from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) host a writing workshop for these individuals every Wednesday evening.

The goals of having them write are threefold, said Ron Capps, veteran and founder of the Veterans Writing Project. One is to have them create works of literature. Another is to share those works to a larger audience to help bridge the military-civilian divide. And a third goal is giving them a tool that can help them gain control.

Capps said frequently, individuals who come to the class are skeptical

about what writing can do for them.

"We have people who come in and they sink low in the chair and are staring down at the ground," Capps said. "We always start with a little round robin, asking them: 'What is your experience with writing? Do you write; if you don't write, what do you read?' and we've had people that just say, 'I don't read and I don't write and I'm not interested in this.'"

Capps tells them to give writing a chance and then he or another instructor give writing prompts, but encourage the group to write for the next 15 minutes on whatever they want. More often than not, Capps said, the service members "commit an act of literature and just completely blow us all away."

One example Capps relayed was an individual who came back to the workshop four times, who at the beginning said he didn't read nor write but by the end had developed an idea for a novel about stock car racers in Virginia.

At a separate workshop, a service member shared his writing about trying to remember what the first kiss felt like, said Bill O'Brien, NEA senior advisor for program innovation.

"He was trying to remember what it felt like, knowing it's there but not being able to feel it and feeling like it will never be that way again," O'Brien said. "It was very interesting feedback because everyone responded very strongly to the piece and a couple of the guys at the table said that's the

best description of what it feels like to have PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) that I've ever heard of."

Dario DiBattista, veteran and writing instructor, said being in military service "over qualifies" one to be a writer because hallmarks of good writing parallel military service. Service members learn about people from all walks of life around the world, how to be concise and are in conflicts, he said.

"That's not to say that you need to be a veteran to be a good writer, but we always have so many people who come through that kind of do that innately," DiBattista said.

Melissa Walker, NICoE art therapist, said writing can help organize one's thoughts when a service member comes for treatment.

"There's a lot happening for them surrounding their identity or how to integrate the treatment into their lives," Walker said. "Perhaps they are realizing things they need to improve in being a better father or a spouse. And then, sometimes, it is just writing out goals for the future."

While Walker focuses on art therapy and NICoE also has a music therapist, Walker said writing rounds out NICoE's offerings even if the writing instructors aren't therapists – which can be less intimidating, she said.

"I've seen some very intense moments and intense writing, but the way the instructors respond to the service members has been very nice to see," Walker said. "Because they talk about their writing and they bring all that in and for some reason – I don't know how to describe it – it contains it very nicely. The service members always seem to leave in good spirits regardless of the subject."

The best feedback of how writing is helping an individual, Capps said, is when they come back to another workshop. He said he's even had individuals who have gone through NICoE's program that have shown up at workshops or seminars outside the Washington, D.C. area.

"We know that (writing) is cathartic and it is a way of getting control of memories and in my case, I had a lot of trauma in my life from my military experience," Capps said. "I was a soldier for 25 years and I used writing as a way to get control of that trauma. I founded the Veterans Writing Project to share that idea and share those skills I gained in graduate school as a working writer and veteran."

Warrior Poetry Project

Connecting military writing to the larger community is one of the goals behind the Warrior Poetry Project, which was started by retired Navy physician Dr. Fred Foote at WRNMMC in 2013.

Foote said he wants the poetry classes and open mic sessions that follow to create an atmosphere where military members, veterans and the public can get together and listen to the poetry as a way to connect them to the greater community.

"Poetry can get you in the head of a wounded warrior in five minutes," Foote said.

Poet, veteran and sometime-instructor for the poetry classes, Maritza Rivera, said poetry can be so powerful because it uses few words and the act of creating art can be healing.

"There's something lethargic about taking traumatic events in life and there's something of beauty in creating art with it," Rivera said.

She described the work created by wounded warriors as "phenomenal."

"One soldier – I gave him a poem to read – he said he hadn't been able to read anything of any length; but [with] the poem, because it was short, there was no pressure," she said. "Short lines, easier to read and because it was abstract. I didn't expect it."

Navy and Marine Corps veteran Jake Schneider served with Foote during Desert Storm, and after reconnecting with Foote 20 years later, Schneider started going to the poetry classes. Schneider, who had been treated at the former National Naval Medical Center for wounds from a vehicle-born improvised explosive device and received treatment at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE), said writing is helping him to come out of darkness he experienced during parts of his military career.

"Writing, I found to be a safe outlet to have the freedom to express ideas that either we are stuck in a world between hell on Earth and all the wholesomeness of a new normal as best as we can define," Schneider said. "Besides war, the worst hell I've experienced is to be lost in oneself and not having the tools to extract pain and detach from the programming that we are killing machines imbued with a zero-defect mentality."

Dr. Rohul Amin, WRNMMC chief of medical residents, said he got involved with the Warrior Poetry Project because he was interested in learning how to use poetry in a therapeutic way with patients.

"It was also great to see veterans of prior conflicts with their work contents," Amin said.

The poetry classes have moved off base this year – and are set to be held every second and third Wednesday evenings from February to July at a restaurant two blocks from the Friendship Heights metro station. The classes delve into all different types and forms of poetry: free and formal verse, war poetry, poetry and medicine, avant-garde poetry and rap/hip hop poetry. Foote teaches the majority of the classes, but he also brings in guest instructors.

"It's pretty easy to write a half-decent poem if you get a little instruction," Foote said. "There's a little bit of a poet in everybody."

Everyone is invited to the poetry classes and open-mic sessions. To find out more, contact Foote at fred.foote@comast.net.

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RED

Continued from pg. 3

ranges weekly visits with more than 20 volunteer dogs and handlers. The American Red Cross Pet Visitation Pack visits with patients, families and staff in pre-authorized clinics at Walter Reed and installation events. Patients and staff may also make special requests for visits.

Yoga: Inpatient and Staff
Red Cross volunteers hold inpatient yoga classes on 7 West three to five times per week. Classes are also held on Mondays and Wednesdays for Walter Reed Bethesda staff.

Creative Arts Program
The Red Cross conducts three creative art activities each week for patients in the Traumatic Brain Injury Unit,

the Behavioral Health Unit and Pediatrics. The purpose of these creative art activities is to provide patients with an opportunity to express themselves by creating simple art projects, and to interact with each other and volunteers in a supportive manner.

Coffee Mornings Program
Volunteers host coffee mornings for Wounded Warriors, family members and health care

providers in the Warrior Ward on the fourth floor, at the Critical Care Unit and Physical Therapy clinics in the America Building. These events allow the participants to converse in an informal setting over coffee, fruit, donuts and bagels.
For the latest information on the Red Cross Programs and Services at WRNMMC and NSAB, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/Red-CrossWRNMMC>.

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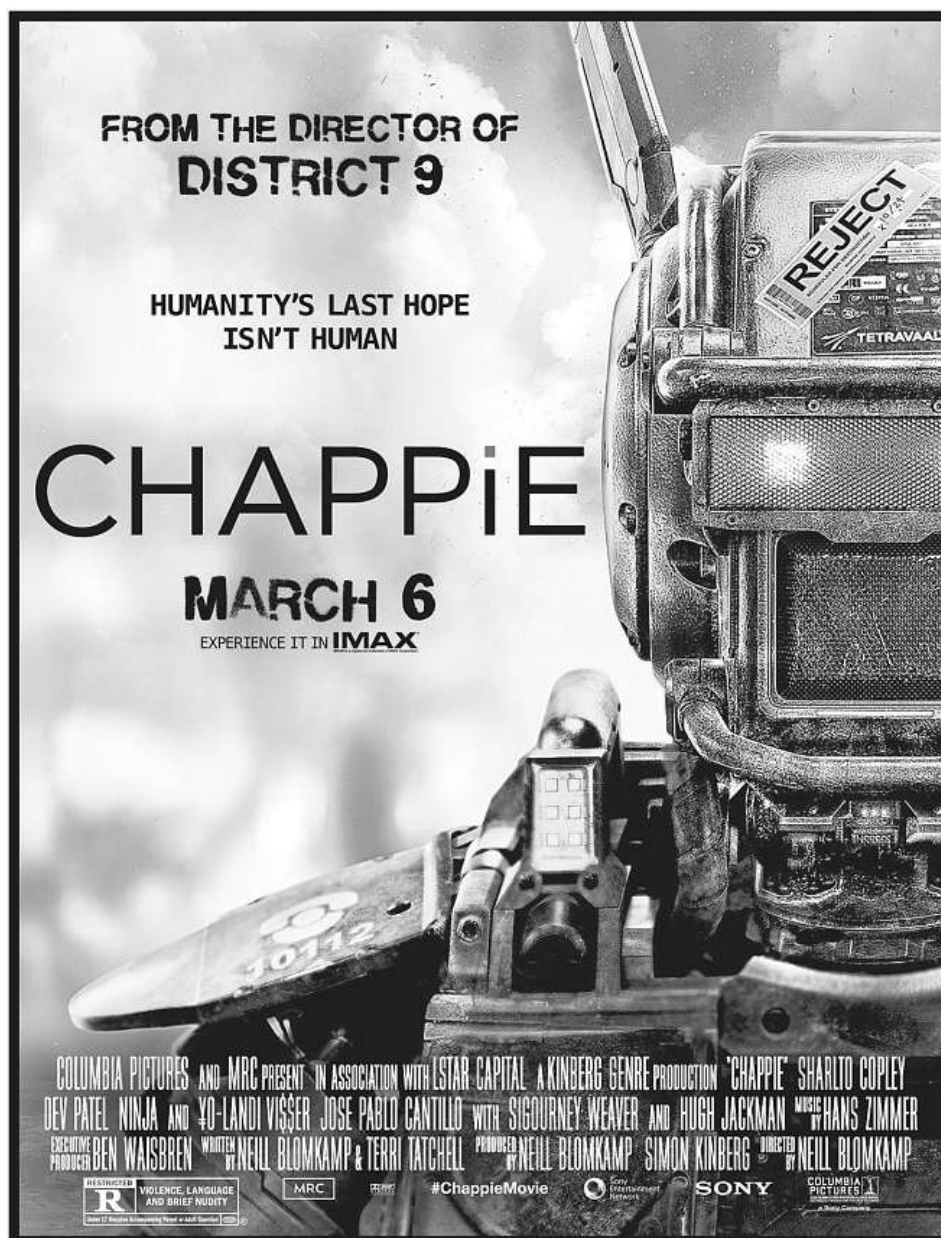
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DISTRICT 9

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